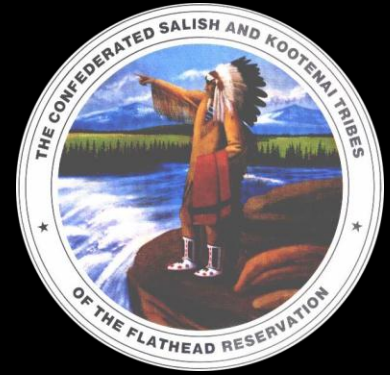




[opi.mt.gov](http://opi.mt.gov)

Montana  
**Office of Public Instruction**  
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent



# Bridging the Divide

A Natural and Cultural Resource Summer Program  
for Tribal High School Students



# Divides?



There are many divides in Native American life:

- Many youths are divided from their Elders.
- Traditional Culture is divided from Modern Science.
- Native students are divided from their ancestral lands and cultural landscapes.

We may have part of the solution...

# We Want To...

- Help Tribal youths and Elders re-connect to preserve Traditional Culture.





# We Want To...

- Bring together Traditional Native Knowledge and Modern Ecology.

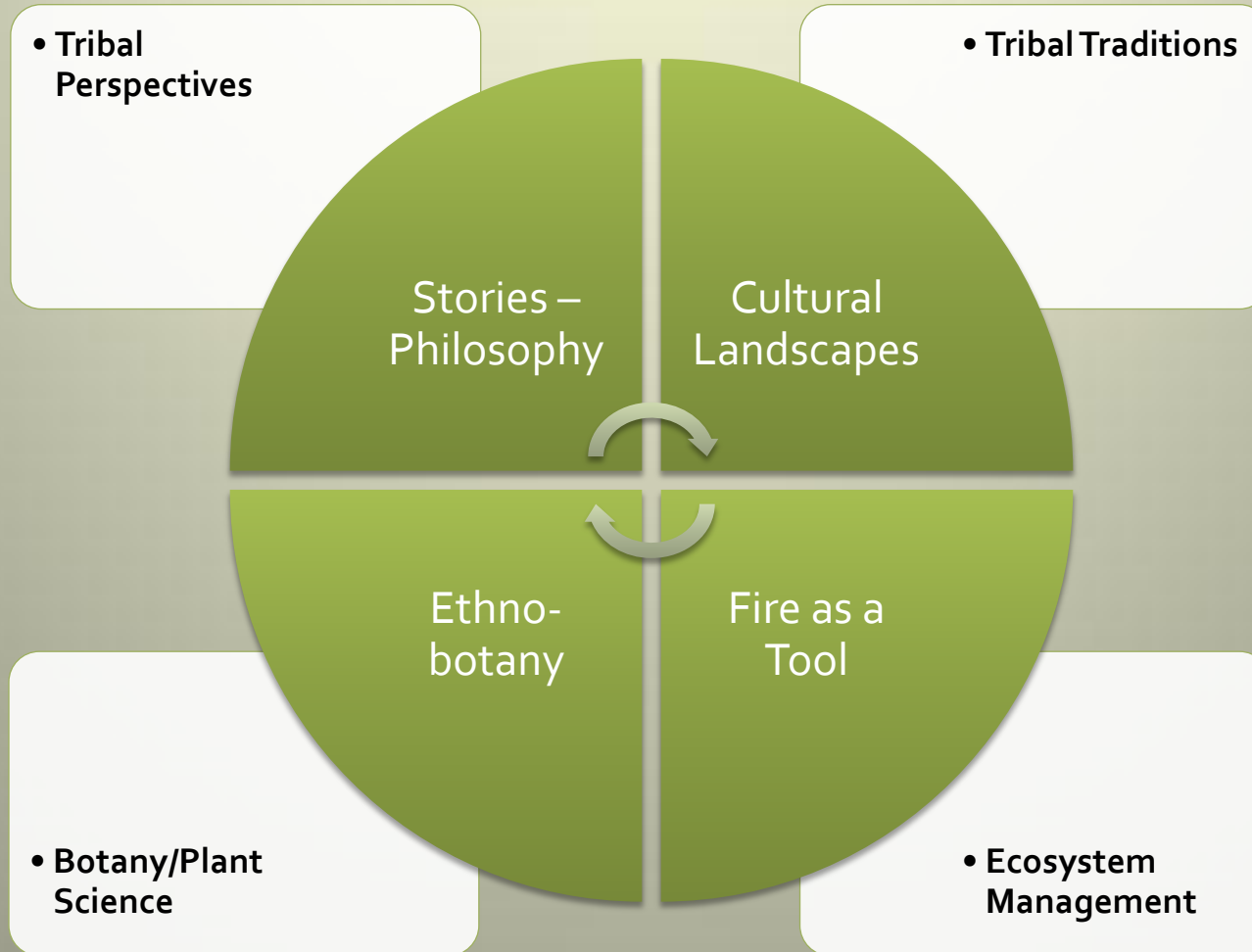


# We Want To...

- Introduce Tribal youths to career opportunities in Natural and Cultural Resource Management.



# ...through our integrated curriculum model:





# To Bridge these Divides...

We are creating a program that unites youth with elders in both classroom and natural settings to allow native students to...

- Reconnect with elders
- Learn traditional knowledge and skills
- Experience traditional landscapes
- Learn about career opportunities in natural and cultural resource management



# Stories & Philosophy



- Tribal Perspectives



Stories –  
Philosophy

- Tribal Traditions

Cultural  
Landscapes

Ethno-  
botany

Fire as a  
Tool

- Botany/Plant Science

- Ecosystem Management





# Traditional Stories

- Scientific ideas are related to and explained in the context of traditional stories.
- All traditional information is supplied and approved by tribal elders.
- The traditional stories provide a unifying theme that links cultural landscapes and traditional knowledge to natural resources and modern science.

# Cultural Landscapes



- Tribal Perspectives

Stories –  
Philosophy

**Cultural  
Landscapes**

- Tribal Traditions



Ethno-  
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Science

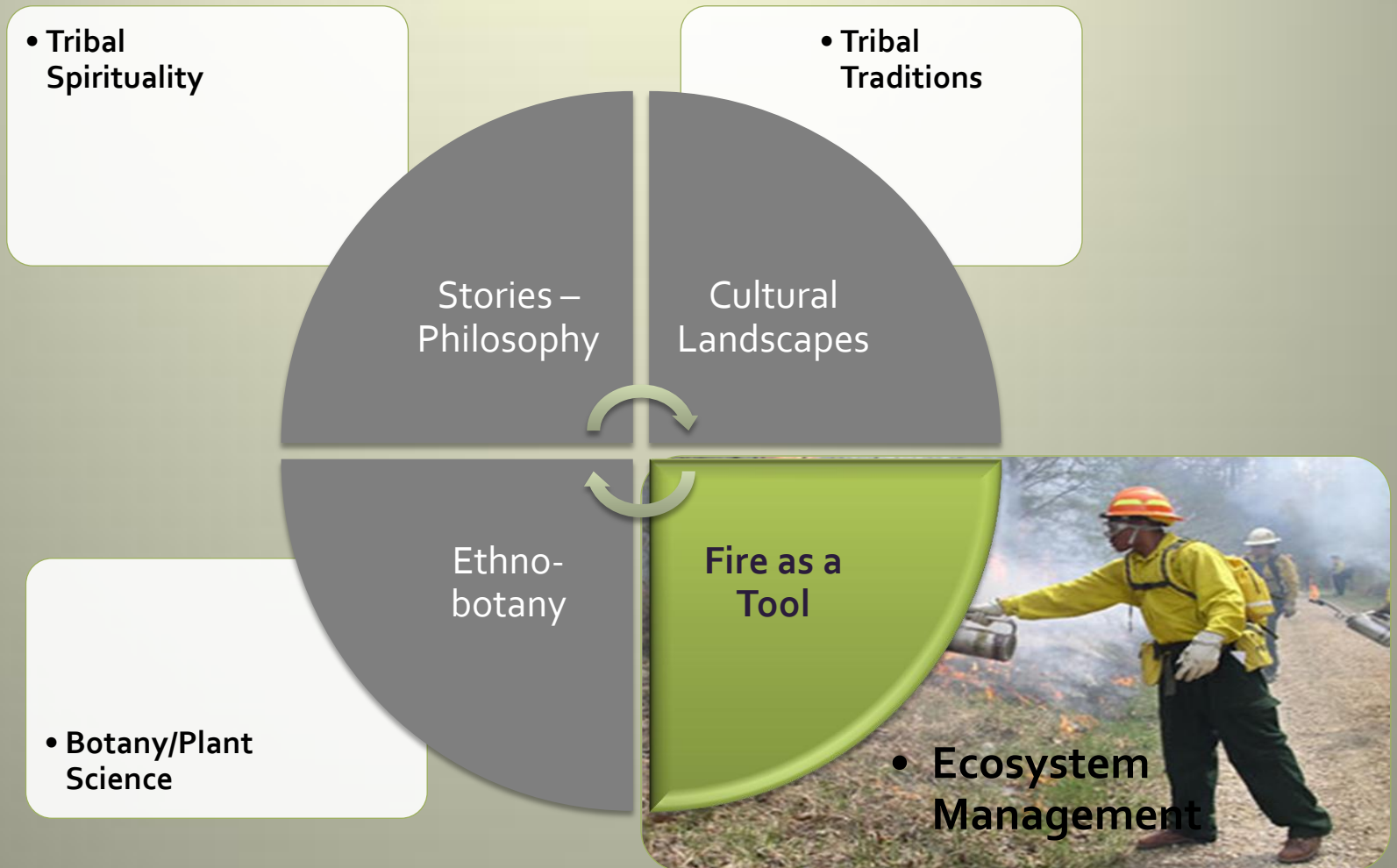
- Ecosystem  
Management



# Cultural Landscapes

- Landscapes are closely tied to the history and cultural identity of Native Peoples.
- Many elders know stories about cultural landscapes that students have never heard.
- Landscapes are living history books that breath life into traditional stories.
- Knowledge of cultural stories will help students feel a connection between their history and the landscapes around them.

# Fire as a Tool





# Fire as a Tool



- Recent studies show that natives burned the landscapes for thousands of years creating a diverse mosaic of habitats across the land.
- Modern land managers have realized that regular fire is needed for healthy, diverse ecosystems.
- Fire's role in the maintenance of *natural ecosystems* and as a perpetuation of *cultural traditions* is realized.

# Ethnobotany



- Tribal Spirituality

- Tribal Traditions

Stories –  
Philosophy

Cultural  
Landscapes

Ethno-  
botany

Fire as a  
Tool

- Ecosystem Management

- Botany/Plant Science



# Ethnobotany



- Ethnobotany is the study of how plants are part of culture.
- Plants are life to native people.
- From foods and medicines . . .to shelters and tools.
- Plants touch every aspect of traditional life.



# Bridging the Divide

- Cultural stories come from the landscapes.
- Landscapes are the basis of ecosystems.
- Ecosystems are composed of plants, animals and other resources.
- Together these make a sustaining cycle of natural and cultural life.
- Bridging the Divide is a program to help students combine their cultural traditions with their modern lifestyle.





# How it works: Classroom

- Five weeks of classroom work.
- Focus on ecology related to traditional knowledge.
- Elders will participate in class.
- Regular guest speakers.



# How it works: Field Camp



- One week camp at Birch Creek Center, Dillon, MT.
- The first year we examined wet meadows and camas.
- Last year we focused on sagebrush steppe and bitterroot.
- This year we explored riparian systems under the theme "Beaver on Trial".



# Field Camp

- Cultural Resources and the meaning of place.





# Field Camp

- Learning Traditional skills
- We made digging sticks and bark bags...





# Field Camp

- We dug camas bulbs and bitterroot.



# Field Camp

- We studied plant diversity...





# Field Camp

- And soil composition.





# Field Camp

- Forest Health and
- Fire as a tool

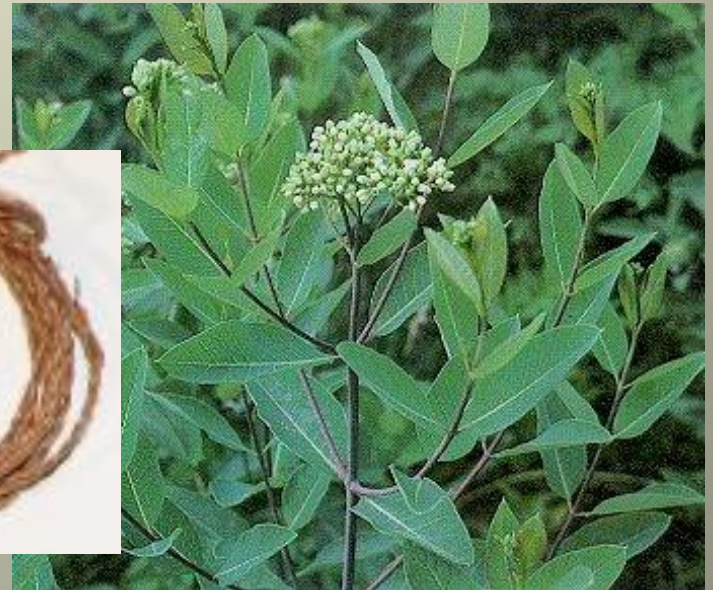




# This year...



- we focused on riparian systems with willow and Indian hemp as our focus plants.



# Thank You



**Mark Sant**, Tribal Coordinator BLM State Office - Montana and Dakotas

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